

The independent voice for the global staffing industry

GR

THE GLOBAL RECRUITER

www.theglobalrecruiter.com |

Issue 280 | April 2026



NEED FOR NON-COMPETE

WATCH YOUR BACK
TECHNOLOGY SERIES 2026

VIEW THE MAGAZINE ONLINE | www.theglobalrecruiter.com/digital-magazine/



Grow with Talent

MAY 12-13, 2026
TORONTO, CANADA



Proudly Brought to You By


WORLD
EMPLOYMENT
CONFEDERATION
The Voice of Labour Market Enablers

 Access



WELCOME

SIMON KENT
EDITOR

April 2026 sees a who raft of legislation coming into the employment world which is likely to have repercussions for employers and recruiters alike. From minimum wage rises to JSL, the ongoing impact of the Employment Rights Act and the Fair Work Agency it can feel that the ground on which people are employed is shifting significantly.

And yet the actual task of finding the right people for the right opportunity remains much the same. Talent is still required by employers and recruiters are nothing if not innovative and forward thinking. While it can seem that the world of work is becoming more challenging and harder to negotiate, the opportunities to deliver value, to find efficiencies and to locate and place great talent continue.

The recruitment world has been the site of huge change over the years and as AI and HR related technologies increase there is no sign of this slowing down. But there is a fire in the industry, a desire to do better and grow – whether that means within domestic markets or internationally.

Make no mistake, the changes ahead are by no means plain sailing or to be taken lightly. There will be mistakes, test cases, and a bedding down of new ways of doing things. The prize is still there – and the objective to succeed and make working life better for everyone will power the industry forward to even greater things. ■

CONTENTS

- 5** NEWS
- 11** OPINION: THE NEED FOR NON-COMPETE
- 15** UP CLOSE: THE INTERNAL CEO TRANSITION
- 21** FRONTLINE: WATCH YOUR BACK
- 27** TECHNOLOGY
- 30** TECHNOLOGY: A STEP CHANGE FOR RECRUITMENT COMPANIES
- 36** TECHNOLOGY: ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?
- 42** CASE STUDY: SIGNALLING SUCCESS
- 46** CASE STUDY: FROM AI TO ROI

Publisher: Gary King
gary@theglobalrecruiter.com

Business Development Manager: Taireen Hussain
taireen@theglobalrecruiter.com

Editorial: Simon Kent
editorial@theglobalrecruiter.com

Director: James Osborne
jamestherecruitmentnetwork.com

Advertising:
sales@theglobalrecruiter.com

Design & Production: Ioan Lucian Sculeac
lucian@theglobalrecruiter.com

Subscribe for free: www.theglobalrecruiter.com



The Global Recruiter is published 12 times a year by The Recruitment Network International Ltd, Unit 3 Merchant, Evegate Business Park, Station Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SX

Contributions: Contributions are invited, but when not accepted will only be returned if accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. Articles should be emailed or delivered on floppy disk. No responsibility can be taken for drawings, photographs or written contributions during delivery, transmission or when with the magazine. In the absence of an agreement, the copyright of all contributions, regardless of format, belongs to the publisher. The publishers accept no responsibility in respect of advertisements appearing in the magazine and the opinions expressed in editorial material or otherwise do not necessarily represent the views of the publishers. The publishers accept no responsibility for actions taken on the basis of any information contained within this magazine. The publishers cannot accept liability for any loss arising from the late appearance or non-publication of any advertisement for any reason whatsoever.

ISSN 2049-3401



NES FIRCCROFT ACQUIRES IT SPECIALIST HALIAN

NES Fircroft has agreed to acquire Halian, a leading provider of technology and talent solutions. Over the past decade, NES Fircroft has achieved significant growth through a combination of organic expansion and strategic acquisitions. The company says it seeks out businesses that share its core values, demonstrate innovation, and deliver exceptional service – organisations that can directly contribute to the company’s long-term objectives.

Following the investment by Twenty20 Capital, and after pursuing a successful buy and build growth strategy, Halian has earned an excellent reputation for delivering IT and digital transformation services, workforce solutions, and managed services across Europe, the Middle East, and the United States. Its deep expertise across Cyber Security, Infrastructure & Cloud, Data & AI, Projects & Change, and Software Engineering significantly strengthens NES Fircroft’s service portfolio and positions the group to meet growing global demand for specialist IT talent – particularly as organisations accelerate toward an AI-powered, data-driven future.

Stuart Fry, CEO of Halian, will continue to lead the business. Clients and candidates will

continue to work with their existing contacts, with no disruption to services. Halian will work closely with NES Fircroft to accelerate growth and present a joint proposition to clients seeking skilled technical resources and specialist talent.

“Following the management buyout backed by T20 Capital three years ago, Halian has gone from strength to strength,” says Stuart Fry, CEO, Halian. “I’m personally very excited about the next phase of our growth and look forward to working closely with NES Fircroft to accelerate our journey and deliver even greater value for our clients, candidates, and teams.”

Tig Gilliam, CEO of NES Fircroft, adds: “We have admired Halian’s business model for many years, and formally welcoming them into the NES Group further supports our commitment to innovation, digital transformation, and building future-ready workforces. Together, we combine world-class recruitment and technology expertise – helping international organisations scale efficiently while supporting local businesses in accessing global talent.” ■



BOOMER HIRING FALLS

Employment Hero's February Jobs Report has found boomer employment at UK small and medium-sized businesses fell -5.8 per cent year on year in February, despite overall employment rising to 4.9 per cent.

The findings have added concerns that older workers are being squeezed out of the labour market and are turning to 'CV botoxing' – stripping years, dates and senior roles from their CVs – to appear younger and appealing to employers.

The Jobs Report found overall employment across UK small and medium-sized businesses increased 2.0 per cent month on month in February, yet boomer employment rose by just 0.3 per cent over the same period. The gap points to a jobs market that is moving ahead without some of its most experienced workers.

For people in mid-life and later career stages, a job search often sits alongside wider financial and caregiving responsibilities, as well as a professional identity built over decades.

The data comes after separate Employment Hero survey research found nearly six in 10 over-55s are not confident they could find a new job within three months if made redundant. They are also 25 per cent less likely to feel confident adapting to new technologies, compared to their younger counterparts. This paints a picture of a labour market where many older workers feel pressure not just to compete, but to catch-up on the ever changing technology landscape.

The combination of weaker employment growth and continued wage increases suggests the

labour market is not simply cooling across the board. It may instead point to a more selective environment, with some older workers returning to work only where pay and role level feel worthwhile. For others, taking a pay cut may be a line they are not prepared to cross, particularly after long careers and at a stage of life where financial commitments remain high.

Wider data from Employment Hero's survey found that 61 per cent of UK workers said the hiring process had made them think twice about looking for work at all, raising fears that poor recruitment experiences could weigh on job mobility across the wider economy. For older applicants, that friction may feel sharper, particularly if they already suspect their age is counting against them before they reach interview.

"When people feel like they need to strip years off their CV just to get a foot in the door, it's usually a sign something in the hiring process isn't quite working," said Danniella Angel, Talent Acquisition Manager at Employment Hero. "For a lot of mid-life candidates, it's less about vanity and more about worrying their experience won't be judged fairly.

"I often speak to candidates who are more than capable of doing the job, but aren't confident they'll get past that first stage," she adds. "That's where a skills-based approach can really help. Tools like Employment Hero's Recruitment Agent shift the focus away from how a CV looks 'on paper', and focus on what someone can actually do, which helps create a much fairer, unbiased starting point." ■

LANDMARK MOMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT ACT



Peter Cheese, chief executive of the CIPD has spoken about the significance of the incoming measures contained within the Employment Rights Act. He has said April 6th marks a significant moment for some of the most substantial elements of the Act. He notes that while many employers have been preparing for this moment, all organisations must be aware of the reforms that now become law. “The changes are far reaching,” he says, “from the expansion of day one family-related rights, to changes to statutory sick pay, reforms to the statutory recognition process for trade unions, and penalties for non-compliance.”

He believes the focus for employers now needs to shift from preparation to compliance and to do this, employers need to share updated workplace policies and clearly communicate these to all staff – particularly line managers who will need to understand the potential implications for their teams and the queries they may raise.

“The CIPD warns that some elements of the Act may lead to increased conflict at work,” says Cheese. “The CIPD’s February Labour Market Outlook found that more than half of employers surveyed (55 per cent) anticipate a rise in workplace conflict from one or more elements of the Act. This highlights the need for effective people management processes and sits alongside new reforms to trade union legislation.

“This month’s changes to trade union recognition pave the way for the next phase of reforms

relating to trade unions coming in across this year, so there’s a little more time to prepare,” he adds. “Many businesses will have worked with unions before but for others it will be entirely new. This is the time for employers to be aware of changes which give the rights of access of unions to every workplace, and how they should prepare for greater engagement with trade unions.”

Cheese also says that all employers need to be aware of the reforms to workers’ rights happening this year, and they can look at guidance from the Government, ACAS and bodies including the CIPD while bringing in HR expertise as needed. This will be especially true for smaller businesses, who often have limited resources and experience of labour market regulations, and could unintentionally fall foul of the law given the breadth of worker rights reforms happening this coming week and later this year.

“April marks the first set of significant changes coming into force but there is a considerable roadmap from Government outlining what is still to come,” he says. “As the CIPD we are supporting our members with practical guidance and will continue to engage with government to reflect insights from employers and HR professionals as further reforms move through secondary legislation.” ■



SKILLS

EMPLOYERS DON'T HAVE CLEAR PICTURE OF SKILLS NEED

Research by European HR service provider SD Worx, has found just under 60 per cent (59.7 per cent) of UK organisations consider workforce planning to be a critical or high priority in 2026. This focus sits alongside the rise of automation and AI as nearly a third of UK organisations (30.4 per cent) cite preparing for automation and AI as a driver for workforce planning, higher than the European average (26.1 per cent). The research also found that organisations are increasingly looking at skills and competencies rather than job titles when hiring staff.

The research is based on surveys of 5,936 HR decision-makers and 16,500 employees in sixteen European countries, including 305 UK employers and 1,000 UK employees.

The results found in the UK organisations are focusing more on workforce planning for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, they want to guarantee sufficient staffing levels and make

planning more efficient (53.8 per cent). This is followed by keeping personnel costs under control (40.3 per cent) and ensuring continuity in service provision and customer experience (50.0 per cent). Talent shortages and increasing staff turnover (37.5 per cent) and complying with complex regulations (16.9 per cent) complete the top five. Technological developments also play a role: 30.4 per cent are focusing more on workforce planning to prepare for automation and AI.

The way organisations approach workforce planning is also changing. Over half of UK organisations (54.9 per cent) say workforce planning is based on a mix of job roles and skills. A further 24.9 per cent say it is primarily based on skills, while 12.9 per cent say it is primarily based on job roles/headcount. Some 7.3 per cent say they have no structured workforce planning in place at all.

However, many are still not confident about what comes next: nearly a third (30.8 per cent) do not yet have a clear picture of the skills their organisation will need in the next two to three years. Employers do indeed appear to have insufficient knowledge of the skills already present within their organisation.

In the UK, 23.4 per cent of employees disagree that their talents and potential are being fully used in their current role (while 51.1 per cent agree). At the same time, employees show a strong appetite to develop: 64.2 per cent agree that they are eager to learn and grow at work. However, only 45.3 per cent agree that they see opportunities to grow or move within the organisation if they want to, and 46.2 per cent agree that their organisation makes it easy to explore internal jobs, roles or projects that match their skills and interests.

Employees are slightly more positive when it comes to daily planning. In the UK, 66.9 per cent agree that it is easy to coordinate their work with colleagues, and 52.7 per cent agree that their

team's work planning process is efficient and well structured. However, many organisations still lack the necessary support: 49.7 per cent agree that their organisation offers tools and systems for work planning.

"If nearly a third of employers don't yet have a clear picture of the skills they'll need in the next two to three years, that's a serious risk, especially as automation and AI continue to reshape roles," said Bruce Fecheyr-Lippens, Chief People Officer at SD Worx. "The priority now is skills visibility: understanding what capabilities you already have, where the gaps are emerging, and how work is likely to change. That takes collaboration beyond HR, including IT, finance and operational leaders, and it requires a continuous process, not a once-a-year exercise. When organisations make skills more transparent and create real pathways for internal moves, projects and reskilling, they can fill more needs from within and respond faster to change." ■





INDUSTRY AWARDS 2026

CLOSING SOON

Enter the Global Recruiter Industry Awards 2026.

17 categories recognising excellence across recruitment. Open to businesses and individual recruiters.

Free to enter. Quick to register.

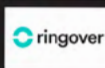
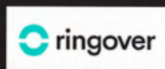
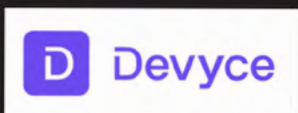
ENTER FOR FREE BY 30 APRIL

Headline Sponsor

Associate Sponsors

Category Sponsors

Reception Sponsor



THE NEED FOR NON-COMPETE

The government's proposed ban on non-compete clauses risks destabilising the UK's £40 billion recruitment industry says Shazia Ejaz, REC Director of Campaigns.



For employers already battling rising costs, new worker protections and global instability, the last thing they need is another shock to the system. And perhaps the only ban they would like to see right now, is a ban on politicians making any more major changes to work rules and employment taxation until the economy is doing better. That said, sensible reform rather than overhaul may work for employees and employers. >



RECRUITMENT

Non-compete clauses stop employees from joining a rival or starting a competing business for a set period after they leave a job. They come from English common law, not from any Act of Parliament. Courts have shaped the rules over centuries, with cases dating back to 1414. The UK has no statute that sets out how long a non-compete can last, so the only test is whether a court thinks the restriction is reasonable. There is no automatic right to compensation, unlike in some EU countries, and although we would not overstate this, it is fair to say that there is no statutory definition of what counts as a legitimate business interest.

Vital clauses

A complete ban on non-competes would have significant negative impact on business. Especially on the £40 billion a year recruitment industry, which is integral to a successful UK labour market and vital to grow our economy. These non-compete clauses are a vital tool for recruitment businesses to protect their interests in a highly competitive and high value industry, with very portable intellectual property. Non-compete clauses help a UK recruitment firm by preventing departing recruiters from immediately joining competitors or starting rival agencies, protecting client relationships and confidential information in a highly competitive sector.

More broadly across the economy, we are concerned that a ban would also lead to a reduction in training and some businesses choosing not to base staff in the UK. For example, the REC has heard that some recruiters avoid practicing in California, a state with a ban on almost all non-compete clauses, for fear that highly trained staff will take their client relationships and key information to an immediate competitor. In fact, our research has heard that a ban would cause several major recruitment businesses to consider not only offshoring, but ceasing operations in the UK entirely.

The business community's resistance may explain why the Department for Business and Trade is cautious about announcing timelines for reform. But we have been clear that the right approach is sensible restriction, not an outright ban, which would simply create new problems in a labour market that needs stability.

We need to be cutting recruitment hurdles and fuelling innovation, to grow our economy, all the while keeping the employment environment stable for business.

Time limits

Putting a legal time limit on non-compete clauses is the most effective, least damaging way for labour market dynamism and recruiters agree that of all the alternatives to the status quo, this is their preferred fix, with 25 per cent of employers surveyed by REC/Whitestone Insight supporting a cap on clause length. This also aligns with existing procedures in many industries. Mandating a shorter period would mean that non-competes provide inadequate protection for intangible property rights. >

But in truth, employers prefer the status-quo.

Once you start introducing limits based on company size or salary thresholds, you create unnecessary complexity and risk perverse incentives.

Clarity required

But one area where employees and employers would both benefit from, is increased legal clarity on enforcement of non-compete clauses.

Current law says a non-compete clause only stands if the employer proves it is reasonable, but this test gives almost no clarity in real cases. Clear, specific guidance would solve that problem. Stronger guidance would also help employees spot when an employer is trying to use a non-compete that a court is unlikely to enforce. The Fair Work Agency could make progress on this.

Right now, employers and employees rely on costly, slow litigation to resolve uncertainty. The labour market needs clearer definitions of when a non-compete is likely to be upheld, so everyone can act with confidence.

Our latest job data suggests that the worst of the hiring slowdown is over, although there will be bumps along the way to a recovery. Businesses need stability to make this happen which you do not get with constant and unexpected changes to employment norms at the rate we have right now. Of course, changes to non-competes will not determine any jobs recovery but it will not help achieve the stronger labour market that we all want. ■





HireAra automates the CV formatting work your team has always done by hand.

Same workflows. In 2 minutes.

Start your trial

TRY NOW,
PAY LATER





THE INTERNAL CEO TRANSITION

Understanding Recruitment explains how it has changed its leadership team and how this brings a positive move for the business.

Leadership succession in recruitment often happens under pressure. When it does, disruption to delivery standards, team confidence and client relationships can follow.

Handled deliberately, however, such a transition can strengthen a business.

[Understanding Recruitment Group](#) has appointed James Hunt as CEO following a progression that began in a junior role and developed through resourcing, consultancy, management and board leadership. Co-founder Chris Jackson has moved into the role of Chairman after nearly two decades leading the business, while Co-Founder Dale Swords continues as Chief Customer Officer.

The leadership team remains consistent, but the operating structure and focus have evolved.

Stability with Structural Change

Leadership development has long been embedded within Understanding Recruitment. Board members each have more than ten years' tenure, and around a third of the wider group has been with the business for more than five years. That depth of experience provides cultural stability and consistency in standards.

At the same time, the transition has introduced deliberate operational change.

“My role has always been to bring people up through the business, challenge them and develop the leadership beneath me,” Chris says. >



As James steps into the CEO position, board responsibilities have become more operational and commercially driven. Chris's role as Chairman now concentrates more heavily on external strategy, market insight and long-term positioning. Internally, the leadership configuration has been adjusted to increase productivity, sharpen accountability and support stronger customer outcomes.

The people remain the same. The framework around them has been redesigned to perform differently.

Internal progression and client continuity

Leadership decisions in recruitment are commercial decisions.

"The last thing a client wants is 12 different account managers in 12 months," Chris says. "The better we get to know a client, the more effective we become."

Understanding Recruitment has long prided itself on strong retention and loyalty. That commitment has created an environment where talent rises through the business, building careers rather than simply filling roles.

This stability doesn't just benefit our people, it directly benefits our customers. Long-standing consultants build deep knowledge of their markets and develop strong, mutually respectful partnerships with clients over a number of years. That continuity means clients aren't repeatedly onboarding new account managers or resetting context. Instead, they work with people who understand how they hire, what good looks like and how decisions are made.

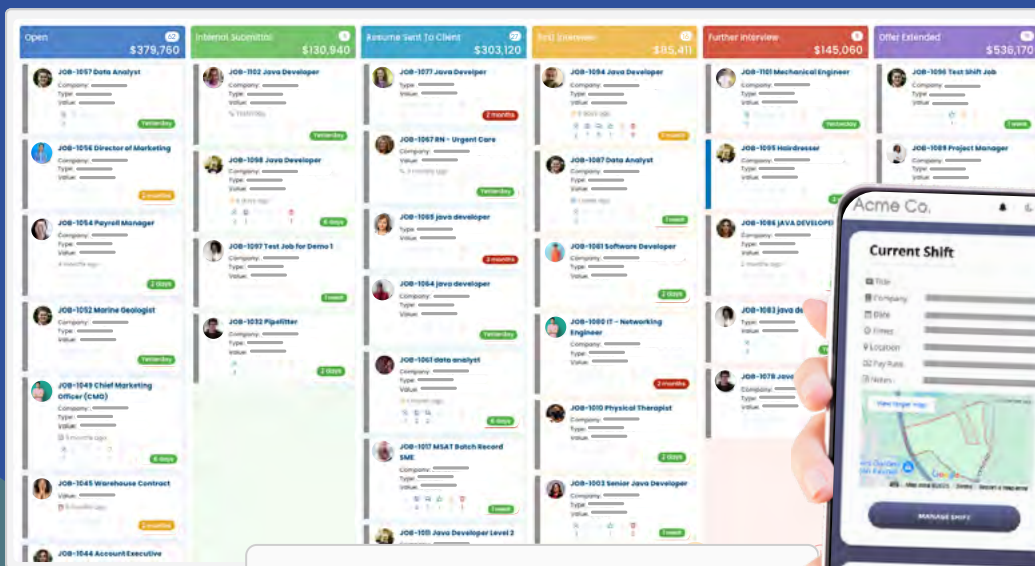
As relationships mature, delivery becomes sharper and more efficient. Ratios from CV to interview to placement improve because there is less guesswork and greater alignment. Trust reduces friction. Experience strengthens judgement. Consistency enhances customer experience.

During recent market volatility, that continuity has been especially important in maintaining delivery standards. At the same time, the business has continued to evolve its commercial model to reflect a more competitive and performance-driven environment, ensuring that loyalty and longevity are matched with accountability and results. >



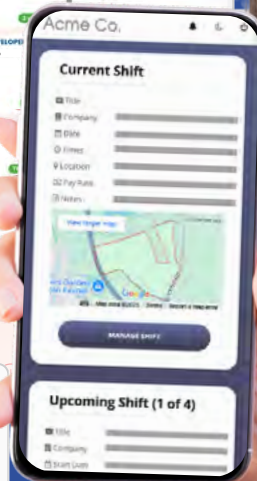
Built for recruiters. Tailored for relationships.

The AI-native ATS and CRM built so your team spends less time in the system and more time with the people who matter.



Compliant Candidates

15	12	57
Unverified	Expired	Verified





A more sales-focused model

Over the past two years, the organisation has restructured its model to create clearer separation between sales and sourcing functions. The aim has been to increase consultant output, improve customer experience and drive stronger commercial performance.

James has remained closely involved in delivery throughout that period. “It’s really important to me that I’m still at the heart of the sales process,” he says. “Still managing clients, still engaged day-to-day.”

That proximity has shaped the changes being implemented. Adjustments to structure and accountability have been informed by active market engagement rather than theory. The cultural foundation remains intact, but performance expectations have been raised and accountability made more explicit.

Leadership through value creation

James is clear about how his leadership approach has matured.

“When I first became a manager, I wanted to be everyone’s buddy,” he says. “But you learn that people respect you more when you add value to them, when you help them achieve their goals.”

The emphasis has shifted toward measurable impact. Leadership is defined by the value created for consultants, clients and the wider business.

Chris recalls a strategy day eighteen months ago as a point where that impact became visible.

“James presented structured proposals on the future direction of the business,” he says. “He delivered them constructively and methodically. That influenced the strategy that followed. James and the Board have my complete support and trust to deliver their ambitious plans. This is a undoubtedly a hugely exciting time to be working within the business.”

Readiness was demonstrated through commercial thinking, structured planning and the ability to implement change at scale.

Responding to a changing market

The recruitment market continues to evolve, particularly around technology and AI. The risk for leadership teams is reacting to every development without clear direction.

“It’s easy to get distracted by the next trend,” James says. “The most important thing is staying focused on the principles of what the business stands for.” >

New tools and operational refinements are tested against long-term goals rather than short-term noise. The focus remains on delivery quality, client relationships and sustainable growth.

Recent adjustments to board responsibilities and internal structures have been designed to maximise productivity, profitability and customer experience while maintaining clarity in standards.

Trust and forward momentum

For James, the appointment brings both responsibility and ambition.

“I feel genuinely grateful for the trust placed in me, from Chris and from Dale,” he says. “It’s a big thing, and I don’t take it lightly.”

That trust extends across the board and consultant base, reinforcing confidence in the direction of the business and the leadership team driving it forward. ■



DATA-LED INSIGHTS — MARCH 2026

Your Data. Your Competitive Edge.

Discover how data-led recruitment research drives measurable outcomes for staffing companies.

WHY DATA RESEARCH SERVICES?

- Eliminate Wasted Outreach**
74% of cold BD calls target companies not actively hiring. Precise market data directs effort where deals are actually closing.
- Identify Talent Before Rivals**
Mapped candidate pipelines surface passive talent before competitors even begin searching — first-mover advantage on every brief.
- Compress Hiring Cycles**
Structured data overlays cut average time-to-fill by 3–5 weeks, reducing client costs and increasing repeat business.
- Accurate CRM & ERP Records**
Clean, enriched data removes duplicate records and stale contacts — turning your CRM into a revenue engine, not a liability.

OUTCOMES YOU CAN EXPECT

- +68% More Qualified Leads**
Activate talent pipeline intelligence and redirect BD efforts to companies with live hiring intent — doubling conversion rates.
- 3x Revenue Growth Potential**
CRM data enrichment in IT & BFSI verticals unlocks dormant accounts and with reveals cross-sell opportunities existing clients.
- 58% Reduction in Time-to-Fill**
Real-time market data overlays and pre-mapped talent pools mean you present shortlists faster — ahead of every competitor.
- 5+ New Market Clusters Opened**
Data-driven BD models surface untapped industry verticals you didn't know you existed, expanding addressable market instantly.

1

500+

Companies Served

2

3x

Avg. Revenue Growth

3

60%

Faster Time-to-Fill

4

98%

Data Accuracy Rate

5

12+

Industries Covered

Data research doesn't just fill your pipeline — it shows you WHERE the market is moving before your competitors have even noticed the shift.

— Indian Elites Data Research Team | info@indianelites.in

Ready to Build a Data-Led Staffing Business?


Request your Free Data Audit and uncover exactly where your business is leaving revenue behind.

Email: varun@indianelites.in or connect on whatsapp: +91 97527 02220

WATCH YOUR BACK

Susie Thomson, Chair Elect of the Professional Background Screening Association (PBSA) and former founder of Security Watchdog discusses what the UK and US can learn from each other in background screening.

I recently had the pleasure of chatting with the Professional Background Screening Associations' (PBSA) Chair Katie Hartley to compare notes on how background screening operates on either side of the Atlantic. What began as a routine exchange quickly became one of those conversations that makes you step back and reassess your assumptions about your own market. The truth is, while the UK and US share the same ultimate objective, placing the right people in the right roles safely and fairly, the paths we take to get there are shaped by very different legal frameworks, cultural expectations and risk philosophies. >



One of the first differences we explored was leadership perception of screening risk. In the UK, our approach is firmly rooted in statutory compliance, governance accountability and data-led decision-making. Directors here carry explicit personal responsibilities, so vetting is closely tied to regulatory assurance. In contrast, Katie noted that US organisations are equally compliance-focused but tend to be far more litigation-conscious. The risk lens is often framed around negligent hiring exposure rather than director liability. That distinction alone influences how programmes are designed, implemented and prioritised at board level.

Privacy is another defining divider. Operating under GDPR has embedded a ‘privacy-first’ mindset into UK screening culture. We are meticulous about what we collect, how long we keep it and who can access it. Katie observed that many US organisations view European-style data protection as complex albeit welcome, yet the US system brings its own challenge: fragmentation. With laws spanning federal, state, county and city levels, consistency can be difficult. As she put it, centralised systems in the US are not always the well-oiled machines people assume; they rely on thousands of courts and agencies reporting data accurately, which doesn’t always happen so getting to the source of the information to ensure accuracy is paramount.

Employment framework influences

Our discussion also highlighted how employment frameworks shape screening behaviour. The US labour market is fast-paced and comparatively flexible when it comes to termination. That drives employers to mitigate risk quickly at the hiring stage, often making background checks a standard part of nearly every recruitment process. In the UK, where dismissal is more complex, employers tend to invest more time upfront verifying credentials and employment history to avoid future disputes. In short: the US emphasises speed and scale; the UK emphasises depth and precision.

Katie made a particularly insightful observation about job-relatedness, a principle that applies strongly in both markets but manifests differently. In the US, background screening is broadly expected for most roles, though the depth varies depending on the position. In the UK, screening is more selectively applied, often concentrated on safety-sensitive or regulated roles. The underlying philosophy is the same: checks should relate directly to the responsibilities of the job. The execution, however, reflects each country’s legal environment and risk tolerance. >



Most founders grow a recruitment business. **Very few turn it into personal freedom.**

Markets slow. Hiring freezes. Clients pause.

A successful agency becomes a personal financial risk,

because building a valuable company is not the same as building independence from it.

Revenue isn't wealth.
Profit isn't security.
An exit isn't a plan.

You need a strategy that converts company success into life options.

We structure how you pay yourself, invest outside the company, and prepare financially long before exit decisions are forced.

Wealth. Options. Freedom.

Life by design
onedaywealth.co.uk



Application

The multinational question

When we discussed multinational hiring, we both agreed this is where organisations often stumble. Companies headquartered in one country frequently attempt to export their domestic screening model globally. Katie mentioned that this can create cultural and legal friction if local norms and laws are ignored. Successful global programmes, she argued, are those that centralise standards but allow local adaptation, a balance between consistency and cultural intelligence.

Access to criminal record data provided another striking contrast. In the UK, disclosure is tightly governed through systems such as DBS and legislation like the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, with clear distinctions between spent and unspent convictions and strict retention rules. The US, by comparison, offers broader access to records across multiple jurisdictions, though Katie cautioned that the most reliable criminal history information still comes directly from local court sources rather than large, aggregated databases. In particular, for those job candidates who have worked toward getting prior convictions expunged or are in areas where 'clean slate' laws are working to give consumers a second chance.

Technology is shaping both markets, but not always smoothly. Automated referencing tools have been more prevalent in the US, yet Katie noted that some have become costly and outdated, even facing legal scrutiny. Meanwhile, UK employers are beginning to adopt automation but still value detailed, qualitative references. We agreed the future likely lies in a hybrid approach, combining efficiency with meaningful insight.

The purpose of screening

Perhaps the most encouraging takeaway from our conversation was how the purpose of screening itself has evolved. Katie reflected that when she entered the industry more than two decades ago, screening was primarily about risk avoidance – essentially, 'don't hire the wrong person.' Today, the emphasis is shifting toward enabling opportunity while still managing risk: helping organisations identify the right candidate, not simply exclude the wrong one. That shift is happening in the UK as well, and it signals a maturing industry on both sides of the pond. >

If multinational employers could borrow one principle from each region, my advice would be this: adopt the UK's rigorous data protection discipline and governance mindset, which has helped build trust and accountability into the screening process. At the same time, there is much the UK can learn from the US. The speed of execution, technical maturity and pace of innovation are striking, as is the deep collaboration among PBSA members to collectively drive the profession forward. The UK is very much on the same journey, and we are catching up quickly, but there is still ground to cover.

Ultimately, our conversation reinforced something I have long believed: no single country has perfected background screening. But by learning from each other, combining the UK's strength in privacy, governance and proportionality with the US's innovation, scale and industry collaboration, we can build a future where screening is not only more effective, but more trusted by employers and candidates alike globally. ■



Scale delivery. Protect margin. Stay in control.



Offshore recruitment and back-office capability for specialist UK recruitment firms that need flexible capacity without adding permanent UK overhead.

Built for specialist agencies

Designed for UK recruitment firms that value speed, reliability, confidentiality and repeatable delivery.



Stronger compliance credibility

Supported by in-house contractor management, payroll control, clear reporting and audit trails in South Africa.



Flex capacity without fixed cost

Scale delivery during client spikes, new PSL wins or consultant attrition without bloating your UK cost base.



Office-supported, not just remote

A stronger platform for control, coaching, engagement and performance than a purely transactional offshore model.



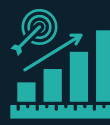
A true extension of your team

More than offshore headcount - an embedded model with lifecycle management, operational oversight and structured governance.



Aligned to growth outcomes

Defined roles, measurable KPIs and support tied directly to service delivery, revenue and margin performance.



Resourgenix helps UK recruitment firms scale with more control, better governance and stronger commercial leverage.

Talk to us about building offshore capability that strengthens delivery without weakening margin.

RESOURGENIX
DELIVERING TALENT



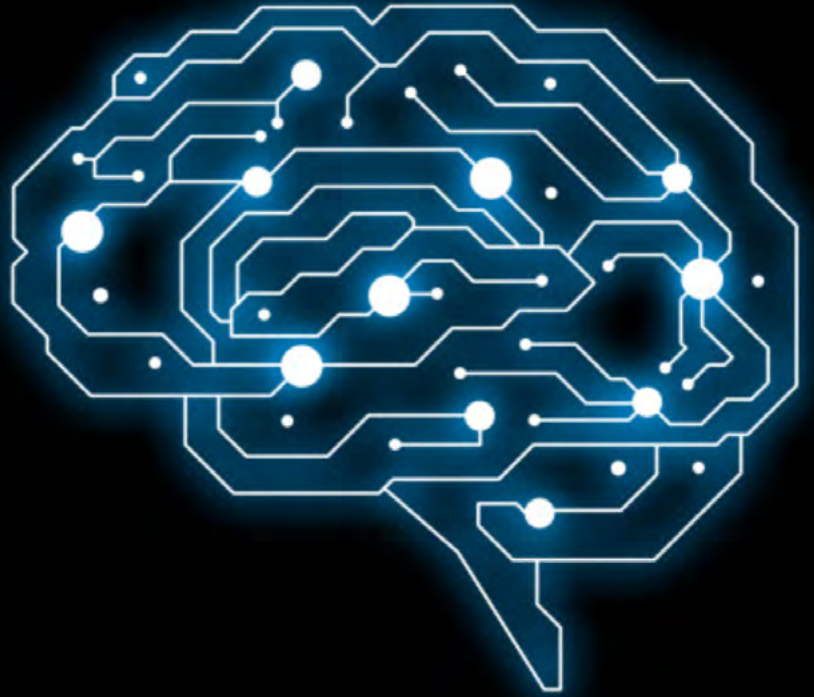
www.resourgenix.com



hellouk@resourgenix.com



+44 203 772 8740



TECHNOLOGY

Sponsored by



loxo



Simon Kent, Editor,
The Global Recruiter

“Rather than becoming blinded by technology now is the time to be pragmatic and direct”

TECHNOLOGY

So, where do you stand on AI? Fantastic time and business saving technology, wolf in sheep's clothing or damp squib? Make no mistake this is the year when technology – and not just AI – has to prove itself. It's not enough to go for the most recent shiny thing, any investment of time and money must pay back.

Over the next few issues we'll be looking in detail at the current swathe of technology entering and influencing the recruitment industry. From back office to candidate facing, from marketing to communicating we'll be considering the full stack available to recruiters today and trying to identify the value of it all.

The thing about value however is that it is never the same thing for two recruitment businesses. You can implement the same solution in each business and get diverse outcomes. The fact is the technology is only ever going to be as good as the selection and implementation process. You can have the most high-spec solution ever and still lose money because your consultants prefer to use something else. Your communications system could be instant, global and comprehensive, and still you lose sight of what's going on because everyone's using WhatsApp.

Rather than becoming blinded by technology now is the time to be pragmatic and direct: here is the problem, what's the solution? Does this tech really make my life easier or have I just gained more steps in a process that was working perfectly well? Do my workforce like this technology and is it really inclusive? What is my candidate's digital experience?

All these questions are increasingly important if technology is truly to make a difference to your business. And they're just the kind of questions we're asking in each of these special issues. So hold on to your investment for the moment, drop the marketing material and take some deep breaths. You're going to find the tech that will make a positive difference for you. The technology that will really transform recruitment. ■



Matt Chambers
Founder & CEO
Loxo

A disconnected recruitment tech stack costs you more than money

By Matt Chambers, Founder & CEO, Loxo

In 2012, I looked at the recruitment landscape and saw a profession being suffocated by a mess of disconnected systems. Data was stagnant, and the manual labor required to stitch these tools together was a massive drain on profitability. The industry was a graveyard of broken tools, forcing firms to manage their business through a series of workarounds.

Technology is meant to save money, but for years, it has actually cost firms a fortune in hidden administrative hours and lost productivity. Most recruiting software was built around individual outcomes, assuming that if you just gave a recruiter better tools, the business would improve. But recruiting doesn't break because recruiters lack tools; it breaks when firms lack insight into what is (or isn't) working.

True efficiency isn't found in a better database or a better mousetrap; it's found in a new Operating System. That's why, at Loxo, we didn't set out to build a better ATS. We set out to invent the Talent Intelligence Platform, to liberate recruiters from the status quo.

The immediate gain for ROI is the consolidation of administrative workflows. Where others built moats to trap their customers in manual labor and marketplace bolt-ons, we built true intelligence into a unified platform. We don't rely on the API of the day or thin wrappers sitting on third-party chatbots. Our AI is embedded within the infrastructure.

When you align your entire team around one intelligent workflow, you make success repeatable and predictable. By moving away from a system that merely stores data to one that drives outcomes, your recruiters become high-value consultants and talent advisors.

Your recruiters are no longer copy-pasting or scavenging for data across tools; everything lives in one system. This allows your team to focus on the absolute pinnacle of performance: the human connection. Once you experience the flow of a system that was designed around the actual recruitment workflow and best practices, you won't just use Loxo—you'll wonder how you ever survived without it.

A STEP CHANGE FOR RECRUITMENT COMPANIES

Technology is changing recruitment says Shayne Simpson, Group Managing Director, TechNET IT Recruitment Ltd. not just on the desk, but across the business.

For years the recruitment industry has focused on technology that helps recruiters find candidates faster, reach more prospects or automate outreach. Those tools have undoubtedly improved productivity on the desk. But they only tell part of the story. >



The biggest technological shift in recruitment today is not happening only on the desk. It is happening across the operational engine that powers recruitment businesses. Compliance, reporting, timesheet management, finance workflows, data management and operational insight are all being reshaped by artificial intelligence.

For decades recruitment followed a fairly predictable model. Agencies invested in technology to drive sales productivity. When that productivity generated more placements, the back office expanded to deal with the workload.

More placements meant more compliance checks, more contracts, more timesheets, more invoices and more reporting. Technology accelerated revenue, while operational teams absorbed the complexity created by growth. In simple terms, agencies bought technology to drive sales and then scaled the back office to cope with the operational workload.

Artificial intelligence is beginning to change that equation.

Today recruitment businesses can scale both the desk and the operational infrastructure at the same time.

Scaling the whole business

Recruitment technology has traditionally focused on increasing consultant productivity.

Search platforms helped recruiters identify candidates more quickly. CRM systems organised pipelines and client activity. Outreach tools allowed consultants to contact larger numbers of potential candidates. But as productivity increased, operational complexity followed.

More deals meant more documentation, more compliance checks, more payroll administration and more reporting requirements. Growth often required significant operational expansion behind the scenes.

AI is starting to remove much of that friction.

Tasks that previously required manual intervention can now be handled through automated workflows. Contracts can be generated directly from CRM data. Timesheets can be logged and validated automatically. Compliance documentation can be monitored continuously. Finance systems can generate invoices based on placement information.

Instead of expanding operational teams every time revenue grows, recruitment firms can deploy intelligent systems that handle these processes quietly in the background. For smaller agencies this represents a significant shift. A firm with a relatively small team can now operate with operational infrastructure that previously required a much larger organisation. >



Technology that fits the business

Another important development is the flexibility of modern technology.

Historically recruitment firms relied on large enterprise platforms. Applicant tracking systems, CRM tools and compliance systems often required lengthy implementation processes and significant investment.

Smaller firms frequently had to compromise, either accepting limited functionality or investing heavily in systems that were not perfectly aligned with how their business operated.

AI is changing that model.

Instead of replacing entire systems, recruitment businesses can deploy targeted automation around specific workflows. Processes such as candidate documentation checks, contract drafting, reporting or CRM data capture can be automated individually.

In many cases these tools can be implemented quickly and tailored to existing workflows.

Large organisations can absolutely benefit from these technologies, but they often face additional complexity. Legacy systems, procurement processes and change management requirements can slow deployment.

Smaller firms have the advantage of speed. They can experiment, adapt and deploy solutions quickly.

Reports that look forward

One of the most interesting changes is happening in reporting and business insight.

Traditionally recruitment reporting has been backward looking. Weekly dashboards summarise activity. Monthly reports track revenue and pipeline performance. Quarterly reviews analyse trends. These reports are useful, but they mainly describe what has already happened.

AI enables a different approach.

By analysing activity signals across CRM systems, communication patterns and candidate engagement data, recruitment businesses can identify patterns that suggest what may happen next.

Deals that are showing early signs of slowing down. Pipelines that are becoming too narrow. Clients whose hiring behaviour suggests additional demand. Reporting shifts from historical summaries to forward looking operational intelligence.

Leaders can intervene earlier, redirect effort and support consultants before problems escalate.

Spotting problems earlier

In many recruitment businesses challenges only become visible once they have already surfaced. >

A candidate withdraws late in the process. A client delays a role after several interview stages. A deal falls apart after weeks of work. By the time the issue becomes obvious, the opportunity has often already been lost.

AI systems are increasingly capable of identifying warning signals much earlier.

Changes in communication patterns, slowing interview progression or narrowing candidate pipelines can indicate potential risk. These signals allow recruitment leaders to intervene earlier and help consultants recover momentum.

The ability to spot issues early can have a meaningful impact on performance across the business.

Managing based on what is actually happening

Within our own organisation we have begun using AI to analyse how the business is actually operating rather than relying solely on reported activity.

Recruitment leaders have traditionally managed their teams based on CRM updates, desk meetings and consultant feedback. Those signals are useful, but they are not always complete. By analysing broader operational data such as communication activity, candidate engagement and pipeline movement, we have been able to build a much clearer picture of what is happening across the business.

The results have been significant.

Using AI to review our operational practices has led to a substantial increase in return on investment per consultant. We have achieved a record start to the year while operating with the lowest headcount the business has had in more than fifteen years.

When leaders have clearer operational visibility, they can make better decisions about where time and effort should be focused. >

The human side of recruitment

Despite the rapid development of AI, recruitment remains a fundamentally human business.

Technology can automate processes, analyse patterns and remove administrative workload. It cannot replace the judgement required to understand a client's hiring challenge or the trust needed to guide someone through a career decision. What technology can do is remove friction.

When consultants spend less time on repetitive administrative tasks and more time speaking with candidates and clients, the quality of their work improves.

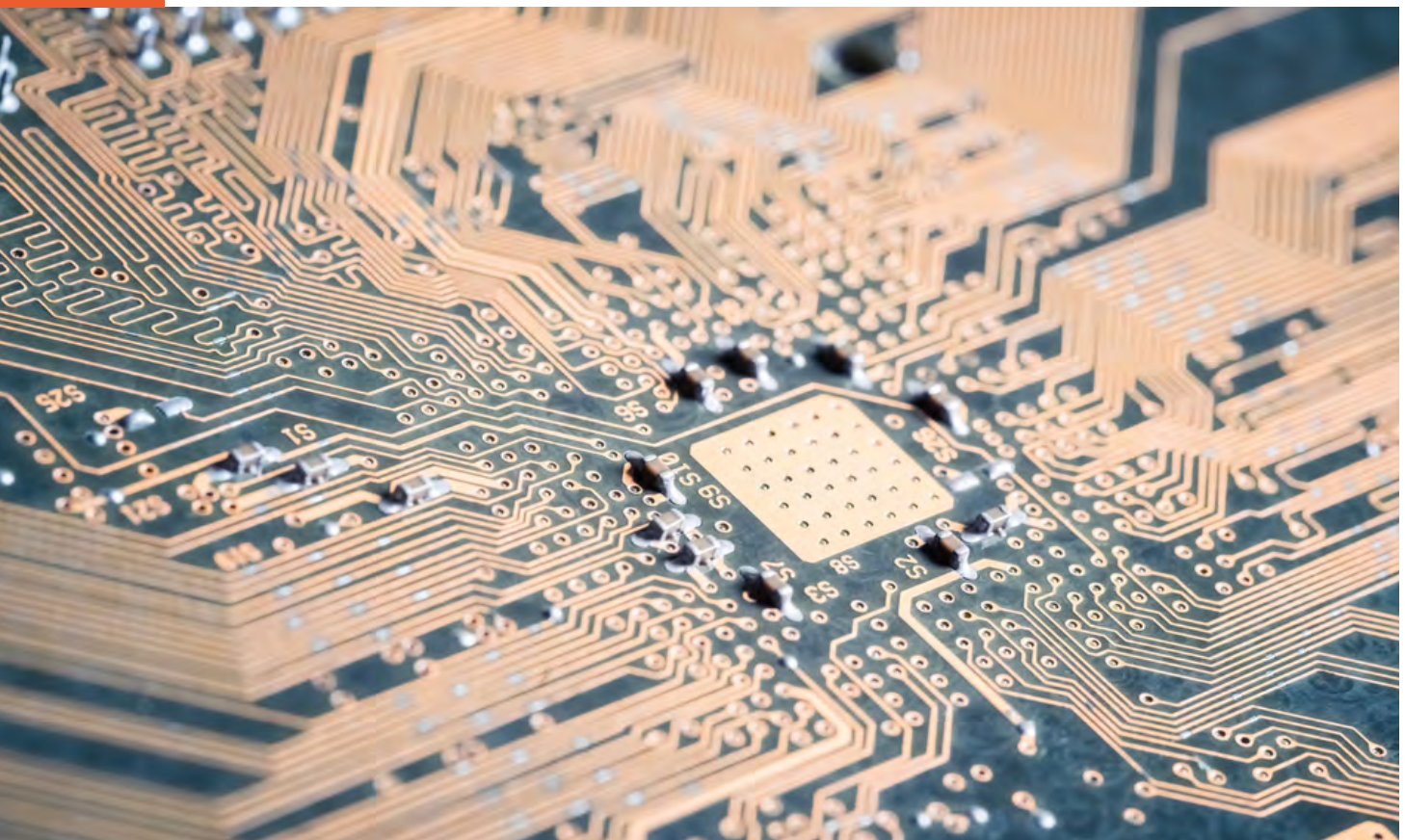
A structural shift

Taken together, these developments point towards a structural shift in how recruitment businesses operate. For decades scale determined capability. Larger agencies had the operational infrastructure to manage compliance, reporting, finance and complex workflows.

Technology is beginning to compress that advantage.

Recruitment firms can now increase productivity on the desk while also automating large parts of the operational workload that sits behind it. The link between headcount and capability is starting to break.

That may prove to be one of the most important changes the recruitment industry has seen in many years. ■





loxo

Turn recruitment chaos into *clarity*

One platform. One workflow. One competitive advantage.
Loxo unites your entire recruiting stack in one Talent Intelligence Platform, so your entire firm operates on one repeatable workflow that makes *every* search your best search.

Seeing is believing. **Book a demo** to experience the Loxo difference for yourself

loxo.co

ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?

Simon Berry, Founder of VoiBo considers how technology can reframe the candidate's journey.



Q: Candidate experience has been a long-standing issue in recruitment. What is actually going wrong?

A: The reality is fairly simple. Most recruiters are operating beyond human capacity. >



Even at a modest level, a role attracting 50 to 100 applications creates a meaningful time burden. At the higher end, we are seeing roles receive as many as 500 applications. When you combine that with recruiters managing 20 to 30 live vacancies, it becomes clear that not every application can be properly reviewed or responded to.

So what happens in practice is that candidates get missed. Not deliberately, but inevitably.

From the outside, that looks like poor communication. Internally, it is a bandwidth problem. The issue is that candidates do not experience the intent, they experience the outcome.

Q: Has anything fundamentally changed, or is this just an ongoing industry challenge?

A: What has changed is that the constraint no longer exists in the same way. Historically, this has been a human limitation. There were only so many hours in the day, and recruiters had to prioritise activity that directly moved placements forward.

Now, with AI and automation, particularly in voice and real-time processing, it is entirely possible to respond to every applicant quickly and consistently.

That changes the expectation. What was previously understandable is now avoidable.

Q: So what should candidate experience look like now in a well-run process?

A: At a minimum, I believe every candidate should receive a timely and meaningful response.

That doesn't mean every candidate progresses, but it does mean every candidate understands where they stand. Speed is also becoming critical. The gap between application and engagement should be measured in seconds or minutes, not days.

More importantly, candidates should have an opportunity to actively engage, not just submit a CV and wait. Historically, most candidates never had the chance to position or sell themselves unless they were manually selected for a call.

Technology materially improves the experience, but it also potentially increases the overall quality of the candidates selected. Now we can shortlist based on automated conversational data, not just based on their CV.

Q: Can you give a practical example of how that works?

A: At VoiBo, we've focused on applying this in a way that fits into real recruitment workflows. I'll give you the example of our 'Applicant Agent.'

When an application comes in, it is immediately and automatically assessed against the role criteria. Based on that, it is triaged into three outcomes. >



NOW HIRING

If the candidate is a strong match, they are called within 30 seconds of applying. The connection rate is over 85 percent, largely because candidates are told upfront to expect a rapid response.

That call allows the candidate to ask questions, clarify details, and present themselves properly. They then receive a clear outcome. They either move forward and are booked into the next stage, or they understand why they are not progressing.

If a candidate is relevant to the business but not right for that specific role, they receive a clear explanation and are directed towards other opportunities.

If they are not a fit at all, they are still informed quickly, with a simple and transparent message.

The key point is that every candidate gets a quick response, feedback, and where appropriate, an interaction.

Q: Some recruiters are cautious about AI making decisions. How do you address that?

A: That concern is understandable, but it is often based on a misunderstanding of how the technology is applied.

AI is not there to make final hiring decisions. It is there to create an initial, very basic layer of assessment.

In most cases, the process works in stages. First, an automated review of the

CV against the role. Second, a structured phone call interaction, to confirm key criteria and gather more context. Third, a human recruiter reviews and makes the final judgement.

So rather than replacing recruiters, it is filtering and structuring the process before it reaches them. And recruiters report being better prepared for their call, armed with additional info, ultimately resulting in a much higher quality call.

And from a candidate perspective, there is also a fairness element, among other positives. Every application is assessed, rather than relying on whether a recruiter had time to open it. It's popular with candidates.

Q: Beyond applications, how does technology change the way recruiters reach candidates?

A: This is an area where there is still a significant gap.

Most outreach today relies on email, SMS, or messaging platforms. The issue is that candidates are inundated with messages and notifications. Their phones are a hive of activity, and most messages are ignored or simply not seen.

A phone call still cuts through. When my phone rings, that's the one thing I really notice. Even if it's not answered, it creates awareness or curiosity, and often prompts a follow-up interaction. >



NOW HIRING

The challenge has always been time. Recruiters can't realistically make hundreds of calls in a day alongside their other responsibilities. At least not without suffering burn out and an inefficient use of that time.

With voice AI, that constraint disappears. It becomes possible to contact large groups of candidates quickly, whether that is for a new role, a shift requirement, or a time-sensitive opportunity.

From a candidate perspective, that speed matters. If two agencies are working on the same role, the one that reaches out first is far more likely to engage the candidate. If I was a candidate, I'd want to be one that was registered with an agency that can capture my attention faster than my competition's.

Q: How does this impact recruiters themselves?

A: Speed has a direct impact. Candidate interest and reliability drop off over time, so being first to engage gives recruiters a powerful advantage.

It also fundamentally changes how their time is used.

A large proportion of a recruiter's day is still spent on activities that don't convert. Chasing unresponsive candidates, screening unsuitable applicants, and handling repetitive admin.

These are also the least enjoyable parts of the role. Automation removes much of that, allowing recruiters to focus on higher value work. That shift improves job satisfaction, reduces burnout, and helps with retention; something that has plagued recruitment for a long time.

With early outreach handled, recruiters can spend their time where it matters, building relationships with engaged candidates rather than chasing those who are not.

That creates space for better preparation, stronger communication, and more meaningful support throughout the process, as well as more time with clients and even face-to-face interaction.

Q: What does this mean for the future of candidate experience?

A: The standard is finally starting to rise.

I believe that candidates will increasingly expect to be acknowledged quickly, informed clearly, and given an opportunity to engage.

The idea that an application disappears into a void is becoming less acceptable. >

Technology now makes it possible to deliver a consistent experience at scale. The question is no longer whether it can be done, but whether organisations choose to do it.

Q: Any final thoughts for recruiters looking at this shift?

A: There is a genuine window of opportunity here.

Candidate expectations are changing, but most processes haven't caught up yet. That creates a gap for forward-thinking agencies to differentiate themselves, not through messaging, but through how they actually operate.

The false belief is that candidates don't want automated responses, whether that be voice or anything else. That's what holds companies back. But our experience shows that this is a big step forward for candidates, too.

The businesses that move early will engage candidates faster, build stronger relationships, improve job quality for recruiters and ultimately make better placements.

At VoiBo, we are seeing that play out in real time. For us it was never about replacing recruiters, but about giving them the infrastructure to deliver the standard they have always wanted to, in a way that is more enjoyable for the recruiters at the same time. ■



Data → Insights → Action →
Insights → Action → More data
Data → Insights → Action → More
Insights → Action → More data

Talent Intelligence: Demystifying the ultimate driver of recruitment efficiency

By: Matt Chambers — Founder & CEO, Loxo

If efficiency is the art of maximizing output while minimizing wasted effort, then Talent Intelligence is the engine that makes it possible. It is the combination of a **smart platform** and a **repeatable workflow**. It's how recruiters scale what is working, eliminate inefficiencies, and build a competitive advantage that compounds over time.

There is a stark difference between a company that uses AI and a company that is native to it. If you are stitching together disconnected tools, you aren't gaining efficiency; you are managing fragmentation. Loxo was one of the first platforms built *on* proprietary AI, not around it. We don't rely on the API of the day; we have spent a decade building the brain itself.

Loxo's platform is powered by over 50 machine learning models and a Knowledge Graph now entering its 7th generation. This is the infrastructure required for true Talent Intelligence and true *efficiency*. AI that is simply tacked onto existing technology—as opposed to being embedded throughout the entire workflow—will only amplify fragmentation. Embedded, native AI works for you in real-time, allowing data to self-update, dedupe, enrich, and recommend—removing the manual labor that can typically suffocate a search.

When you operate with Talent Intelligence, you transform raw data into clear signals, creating a continuous feedback loop: **Data → Insight → Action → More data**.

Hear this: speed and efficiency are not the same thing. When your firm relies on scattered data and improvised systems, AI can make things move *faster*, but it won't fix the underlying efficiency problems you may be facing. When a firm runs on a unified Talent Intelligence workflow, the gains are undeniable:

- **Rapid onboarding:** New hires ramp quickly because the platform itself is the playbook.
- **Repeatable quality:** You stop relying on one hero recruiter and elevate the entire team to the same standard.
- **Visibility & control:** You get insight into what's working, what isn't, and why.
- **Compounding productivity:** You—and your technology—get smarter with every search.

That is the definition of efficiency: a more predictable, scalable business that grows more intuitive with every single search.

SIGNALLING SUCCESS

Adam Rogerson, Pertemps Network Group IT Director charts the impact of technology on the CV and why this has changed the game in his company.



The CV has been the backbone of recruitment for decades. Today a candidate can generate a polished, well structured, keyword-optimised CV in under two minutes using widely available AI tools. They do not need specialist knowledge to do it. They simply describe their experience in broad terms and allow the system to produce the document. >



That should make the entire recruitment industry pause because, if a convincing CV can be produced instantly by almost anyone, the signal recruiters have relied upon for years to evaluate candidates begins to lose its value.

The CV once acted as a fingerprint of experience. In an AI generated world, it is increasingly becoming a mask.

Across the industry, recruiters are seeing applications that are increasingly similar in tone, structure and keyword density. The document that once represented a candidate's experience is becoming easier to manufacture and harder to interpret. AI has not broken recruitment. It has exposed how fragile our signals always were.

At Pertemps, we recognised this shift early. Rather than focusing purely on automating recruitment tasks, we have been investing in rebuilding the signals we use to understand candidate capability, labour market dynamics and client demand.

Rebuilding the signal

If the CV itself is becoming less reliable, the response cannot simply be more sophisticated CV screening. The answer is to invest in better signals.

Over the past year, Pertemps has developed a skills taxonomy that now sits at the core of our recruitment platform. Instead of maintaining thousands of fragmented job titles, roles have been rationalised into more than 500 capability groups across 38 sectors.

Each capability group represents an amalgamation of related roles and

skillssets, supported by a synonym structure that reflects how candidates actually describe their experience rather than how job descriptions traditionally categorise it.

This structure works alongside CV parsing that extracts capability signals from candidate profiles as they enter the system. Instead of relying purely on titles or keywords, the platform interprets underlying skills, industry exposure and experience.

Over time, as this information accumulates alongside placement outcomes, patterns begin to emerge. We start to see which combinations of capability and experience correlate most strongly with successful placements.

This is where AI becomes genuinely useful. Not in generating CVs, but in helping recruiters interpret the signals within them.

It is also why much of our focus in recent years has been on strengthening the foundations of our platforms and data. AI capability is only as useful as the signals it can access. Without structured data, well-defined capability models and clear governance, AI simply automates weak assumptions. By investing first in how our systems capture and interpret recruitment signals, we are now in a position to apply AI in ways that genuinely enhance recruiter judgement rather than simply accelerating existing processes.

Historically, recruitment has relied heavily on job titles and linear career paths as proxies for capability. A capability based approach changes that. >



When roles are understood at the skills level rather than relying on titles, recruiters can identify candidates from adjacent industries with transferrable skills, individuals who have developed expertise through non-traditional routes and near matches who could become viable with targeted development.

For clients, this expands the talent pool. For candidates, it opens pathways that would previously have been invisible. And for recruiters, it allows conversations to shift from matching what is available to advising on what is realistically achievable.

Behavioural signals: the next layer

The CV is no longer the only source of information about candidate capability. Modern recruitment platforms generate rich operational data through everyday interactions: emails, messages, screening conversations, application behaviour and engagement patterns throughout the hiring process.

When handled responsibly, and within appropriate governance frameworks, these interactions create behavioural signals that can be far more informative than a static document.

In an AI-generated content world, these real interaction signals become increasingly valuable.

Traditional recruitment systems rely heavily on keyword searches and structured filters. Recruiters search for job titles or specific skills and manually review the results. As datasets grow larger, that model becomes increasingly limiting.

Semantic search and capability interpretation allow recruiters to surface candidates whose experience is contextually similar, whose skills transfer across sectors or whose capability profile

aligns with a role even if their job title does not.

The result is not automation replacing recruiters. It is AI augmenting how recruiters interpret complex talent information.

From matching to market intelligence

Another shift is happening at the level of labour market insight. Labour market intelligence can now be integrated from multiple sources, combining external datasets with signals derived from placement history and candidate activity.

Instead of simply responding to vacancies with the best available candidate, recruiters can explain where demand for particular skills is rising, how salary offers compare with the wider market and why certain roles are proving difficult to fill.

Recruitment becomes less transactional and more advisory.

The risks that need honest discussion

AI in recruitment also introduces risks that need to be addressed openly.

Skills based models learn from historical data. If historical hiring patterns reflect bias, automated systems can replicate those patterns at scale unless deliberate controls are introduced.

Taxonomies also drift. The skills landscape evolves quickly and classification systems must continuously adapt to remain accurate – and AI generated CVs that pass automated screening may not reflect genuine capability. AI improves the information available to recruiters, but it does not replace the judgement required to act on that information. >

Recruiters need to understand why a system surfaces a particular candidate, and organisations need to be able to demonstrate how automated recommendations were generated.

The real shift underway

The AI conversation in recruitment has largely been framed around two ideas: that AI will replace recruiters or that it will simply make recruitment faster.

What is actually happening is more fundamental.

The signals recruitment has historically relied upon are changing. CVs are becoming easier to generate. Career paths are becoming less linear. Skills evolve faster than traditional job titles can capture.

Recruitment is shifting across several dimensions at once:

- From CVs to capability signals
- From keyword matching to interpretation
- From databases to intelligence platforms
- From automation to augmentation.

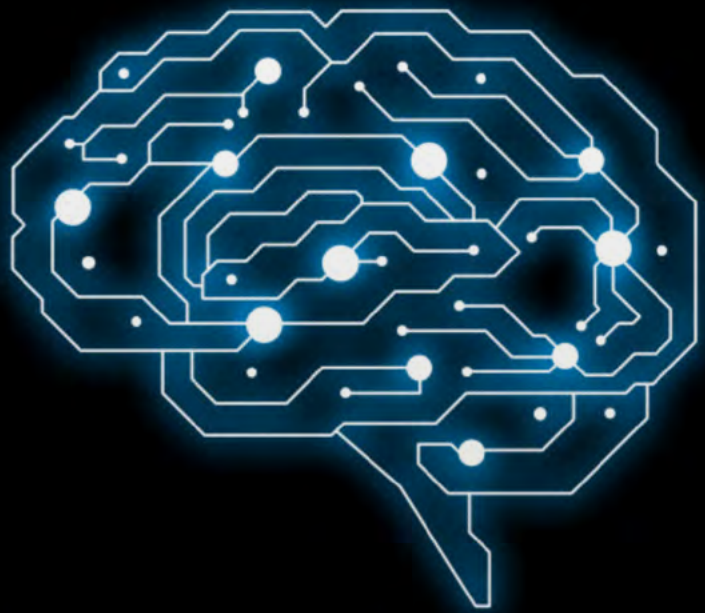
Organisations that recognise this shift early, and invest in rebuilding their capability around better signals, better data and deeper labour market understanding, will gain a structural advantage.

The future of recruitment will not belong to the organisations with the most AI tools. It will belong to those that rebuild the signals the industry relies upon to understand capability in a world where information is increasingly easy to generate, but harder to trust. ■




FROM AI TO ROI

Doug Rode, Regional Managing Director for Michael Page UK and Ireland explains how AI can drive real ROI in recruitment.



In recent years, AI has become increasingly embedded in recruitment, transitioning from early experimentation into more regular use. As we move further into 2026, the focus is shifting – from whether organisations are using AI, to how effectively they are applying it to deliver meaningful business outcomes. >



This shift is redefining how the industry thinks about return on investment. Previously, AI's value in recruitment was framed around speed and efficiency: reducing time-to-hire, automating administrative tasks, and increasing pipeline volume. While these gains remain important, they are no longer sufficient. In a market defined by rising hiring costs and increasing scrutiny on workforce performance, ROI is being recalibrated. The focus has moved from how quickly roles are filled to how effectively those hires deliver long-term value.

The organisations seeing the greatest impact from AI are those using it not as a shortcut, but as a strategic tool to improve hiring certainty.

ROI as hiring value, not process efficiency

Efficiency has traditionally been one of the easiest aspects of recruitment to measure. Faster shortlists, fewer manual touchpoints, and more streamlined processes have all delivered clear, immediate gains. However, these metrics only tell part of the story. The real value of recruitment is ultimately reflected in outcomes. While efficient processes are important, the long-term impact comes from how well a hire contributes to team performance and business goals. Well-aligned hires can generate value that compounds over time.

AI is now enabling organisations to measure and optimise for that value. By analysing skills alignment, career trajectories, and performance indicators, AI tools can provide a more nuanced view of candidate suitability. At the same time, AI can support in generating broader market

insight – highlighting shifts in skill demand, talent availability, and compensation trends. This allows recruiters to bring data-led perspectives into client conversations, helping organisations make better decisions not just about who to hire, but how to approach the market more effectively. Instead of relying solely on past job titles or qualifications, organisations can assess how an individual's capabilities map to the specific demands of a role and the broader objectives of the business.

This shifts the definition of ROI from transactional efficiency to long-term contribution, focusing less on how quickly a role is filled and more on the confidence that a hire will succeed and drive meaningful impact.

The shift to skills-based hiring and long-term workforce planning

This evolution in thinking is closely tied to the shift from people-based to skills-based hiring. Traditional recruitment models have been built around roles and credentials: predefined job descriptions, linear career paths, and rigid qualification requirements. But in a rapidly changing business environment, these models are becoming less effective.

Organisations are increasingly shifting towards a more skills-focused approach to workforce planning. AI can play an important role in supporting this shift. By analysing data across the market, it can help identify capability gaps, highlight emerging skill trends, and provide insight into future demand. This enables organisations to move from reactive hiring towards more proactive workforce planning. >



For example, instead of hiring for a single role, organisations can map the underlying skills required across multiple functions. This opens up more flexible talent strategies, including redeployment, upskilling, and hybrid roles that better reflect the realities of modern work.

It also expands the talent pool. By focusing on skills rather than traditional markers of experience, organisations can identify high-potential candidates who may have been overlooked in a more conventional process. This is particularly valuable in competitive markets, where access to scarce skills is often the key constraint on growth.

The result is a more dynamic, responsive approach to talent – one that aligns closely with business strategy and delivers measurable ROI through improved workforce capability.

The human advantage in an AI-saturated market

As AI becomes ubiquitous, it brings with it the challenge of increasing standardisation. Candidates are increasingly using AI tools to generate CVs, cover letters, and even interview responses. While this can improve the specificity of applications, it also makes differentiation more difficult.

When every CV is optimised and every application is polished, surface-level signals become less reliable, creating a paradox where the more recruitment processes are enhanced by AI, the more valuable human judgement becomes.

Recruiters are uniquely positioned to resolve this tension. While AI can surface

patterns and highlight potential matches, it is the recruiter who brings the context, judgement, and experience needed to make confident hiring decisions. Their role goes far beyond assessing what is presented; they interpret it, drawing on a deep understanding of candidate motivations, career trajectories, and long-term potential.

This human expertise is where real value lies. A strong recruitment partner can recognise the signals that AI cannot fully capture, validate skills in a meaningful way, and identify talent that may not fit a conventional profile but can deliver significant impact. The most impactful recruiters are those who build long-term relationships with candidates, gaining a deeper understanding of their skills, experience, and career ambitions over time. This enables more meaningful guidance and better alignment with the right opportunities.

Equally, understanding of broader market trends and nuance is critical – this is where the importance of regional and specialist knowledge is vital. While each candidate is unique, understanding the broader forces driving candidate behaviour is essential to securing the right talent.

In this context, AI does not replace the recruiter; it elevates their role. By automating routine tasks and providing data-driven insights on market trends, AI frees up time for higher-value activities like consultation, interpretation, and relationship-building. These human elements become the differentiator in an increasingly automated landscape. >

AI as a strategic decision-making tool

The most effective organisations are those that recognise AI's role as an enabler, not a decision-maker. As mentioned before while AI can surface patterns, identify correlations, and generate recommendations, it does not possess context, judgement, or accountability. These remain human responsibilities.

Leading recruitment teams are therefore using AI to inform, rather than dictate, their decisions. They treat AI-generated insights as inputs into a broader decision-making process, one that combines data with experience, market knowledge, and strategic understanding.

For example, AI might highlight a candidate as a strong match based on skills and experience. A recruiter can then interrogate that recommendation, considering factors such as cultural fit, career trajectory, and long-term potential. Conversely, AI might overlook a candidate whose background does not fit a conventional pattern, but who, through human evaluation, is identified as a high-impact hire. Real value comes from bringing technology and human expertise together. AI provides the insight, while recruiters bring the judgement – helping organisations make decisions they can feel confident in.

Ultimately, AI is driving a shift in how recruitment success is measured. In a market where every hire carries strategic weight, certainty has become the priority. Hiring certainty is about making confident, well-informed decisions, knowing that a candidate has the skills, potential, and alignment to succeed and deliver real impact. It's about reducing guesswork and relying more on evidence.

AI helps by providing clearer insight, supporting better assessments, and improving workforce planning. But it's the combination of these insights with human judgement and experience that delivers meaningful ROI. As the landscape continues to evolve, organisations that balance advanced technology with strong recruitment expertise will be best placed to navigate complexity and build high-performing teams. The real impact comes when AI and human judgment work together to deliver better, more confident hiring decisions. ■

